

Mercury

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Integrative Pharmacy, Sand Point Clinic Pharmacy, View Ridge Pharmacy, Westside Pharmacy, and all Bartell Drugstores in King County.

The program collected more than 21,700 mercury fever thermometers, containing 24-48 pounds of mercury.

Residents dropping off mercury fever thermometers were asked to place the thermometers in a rigid plastic container (the original case or a toothbrush container) or put them in two heavy plastic bags with zip locks.

Mercury is high priority toxic substance targeted for elimination by the US EPA, the Washington State Department of Ecology and the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County. The takeback program was promoted through radio ads, print ads in the newspaper and targeted magazines and through promotional efforts of the individual pharmacies.

For more information contact Lauren Cole at lauren.cole@metrokc.gov or 206-296-4363.

Board of health unanimously bans sale of mercury fever thermometers

At its March 21 meeting, the Board of Health of King County unanimously passed a regulation banning the sale of mercury fever thermometers without a prescription in King County. Several members of the public and a representative of the Physicians for Social Responsibility testified in favor of the action. No one opposed it.

Many large drugstore chains had already stopped the sale of mercury fever thermometers on a voluntary basis. Mercury fever thermometers are a focus of attention for the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program mercury action plan for 2003.

Note: At press time, the Washington State legislature had passed a bill that bans the sale of mercury fever thermometers in Washington. It awaits the Governor's signature.★

Pharmaceuticals

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If IRAC musters support among hazardous waste management officials, environmentalists and health care providers for labeling efforts—such as bar coding—the EPA may also lend support.

For more information on the IRAC Pharmaceuticals Workgroup, contact Debra Oliver at debra.oliver@metrokc.gov or 206-263-3079. To help petition the FDA and gather more support for including RCRA information on pharmaceutical bar code labels, contact Cheri Grasso at cheri.grasso@metrokc.gov or 206-263-3089.★

—Debra Oliver and Cheri Grasso,
Water and Land Resources

EnviroStars drycleaner wins 2003 Green Globe Award

Madison Carnolia Cleaners in Seattle recently received a 2003 Green Globe Award for leadership in reducing hazardous waste and promoting environmentally responsible practices within the drycleaning industry.

Ron Sims presented the *Leader in Hazardous Waste Reduction* award to business owner Dick Turner in an April 11 ceremony. King County presents the Green Globe Awards every two years to businesses and individuals to recognize achievements in environmental stewardship.

Madison Carnolia Cleaners has successfully integrated waste reduction, recycling, and energy conservation into its daily operations. By installing dry-to-dry equipment and a high-tech wet cleaning process (the first in Washington state), the drycleaner reduced hazardous "perc" solvent use by 73 percent. Process wastewater is treated so that is no longer hazardous, then evaporated.

In addition, the Magnolia shop recycles cardboard, hangers, plastics and unclaimed clothing. A lighting retrofit program, along with other energy saving mea-



Dick Turner, left, owner of the Madison Carnolia Cleaners in Seattle, receives a Green Globe Award from King County Executive Ron Sims.

asures, helped reduce energy use 56 percent, saving \$1,218 annually. Naturally, fluorescent lamps from the retrofit were also recycled.

Madison Carnolia Cleaners was the first drycleaner in the region to be recognized with King County's highest five-star EnviroStars certification rating.

Turner, past president of the Northwest Drycleaners Association, is working to make environmental stewardship practices widespread in the drycleaning industry. For example, he was instrumental in connecting government agencies and local drycleaners through a Korean-speaking representative.★

—Laurel Tomchick, *Water & Land Resources*

Management of some dangerous waste pharmaceuticals simplified

Beginning April 13, 2003, pharmaceuticals generated by the health care industry are excluded from the Dangerous Waste Regulations—provided these pharmaceuticals are incinerated using a specified process. The exclusion involves only those pharmaceuticals that are not regulated as hazardous waste under RCRA; medical personnel will still have to separate and manage federally regulated pharmaceutical wastes.

The purpose of this change is to simplify management of waste pharmaceuticals and to resolve regulatory conflicts that can arise in their management.

The rule change resulted from studies and recommendations provided by the Interagency Regulatory Analysis Committee (IRAC) Pharmaceutical Workgroup. Established in March 2000, the group addressed the complexities—and conflicts—encountered by health care personnel who generate waste pharmaceuticals.

Using bar codes to designate waste? Properly designating waste pharmaceuticals remains a problem for health care professionals because manufacturers offer little useful information about product ingredients. The Food and Drug Adminis-

tration (FDA) has proposed putting a bar code on drugs to improve patient safety; the code would include the National Drug Code and medication-related information. The IRAC workgroup is exploring options for using this system.

IRAC would like manufacturers to include RCRA-related information on the bar code, allowing easier designation and promoting proper management of waste pharmaceuticals.

The Environmental Protection Agency (headquarters) has shown some interest in this approach.

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Natural Yard Care techniques are pollinated in ten neighborhoods

The buzz is out! Natural Yard Care Neighborhoods is off and running in ten neighborhoods in seven King County cities. Participating cities are partnering with King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks to educate residents on natural yard care techniques. The goal of the project is to help residents who want—"a nice lawn, but without the chemicals or extra work."

Workshops feature well-known speakers—including Ciscoe Morris, Marianne Binetti, Debbie Natelson, David MacDonald, Greg Rabourn and Doug Rice—speaking on such topics as soils and compost, lawn care, native plant use, water conservation and integrated pest management for the home gardener. Participants receive free soil test kits that bring home the "It's Alive!"

soil and compost message and demonstrate that local soils can often be depleted.

Doug Rice, DNRP program manager, makes the point that what people do in their yards has the biggest impact on water resources in the region. He describes concerns about common pesticides found in local streams and in blood samples from local toddlers, especially in light of the public safety mission of Local Hazardous Waste Management of King County. Copies of *Grow Smart, Grow Safe* and *Stop! Before You Spray* are two of the more popular training materials.

Participants become role models and promoters

The program extends beyond training events, primarily through a Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline. Program reply cards allow partici-

pants to promote the workshops to interested friends and neighbors. Rice offers a number of incentives to those who promote the program, including an omnibus training later this fall.

Did behavior change?

A large-scale evaluation has been developed by social marketing consultant Nancy Lee, working in collaboration with the cities and Rice. The evaluation includes measures of training effectiveness, behavior and attitude change, message diffusion and regional impact, as well as a summary of media attention. Finally, the County will look at the cost effectiveness of the workshops using a DNRP Public Affairs database tool.

For more information contact Doug Rice at doug.rice@metrokc.gov or 206-296-8360. ★

—Mary Rabourn, DNRP

Mercury updates

State Senate fails to skirt mercury bill

The Washington State Mercury Bill passed the State Senate—its last hurdle—by a vote of 47-1 on April 17, 2003. (The single 'nay' vote was Sen. Bob Morton, chairman of the Committee that had kept the bill from a floor vote.) The bill moves back to the House, which had previously passed the bill, for concurrence and to the Governor's office for his signature. Both are considered formalities.

The Washington Mercury Bill can be read in full at www.leg.wa.gov/wsladm/billinfo/dspbillsummary.cfm?billnumber=1002. Some of its provisions include:

- Mercury-containing fluorescent lamps must contain a label that, among other things, tells the consumer how and where to dispose of the spent lamp;
- Schools are prohibited from purchasing bulk mercury or mercury compounds and must remove all mercury used as teaching aids in science classes;
- Mercury-containing novelty items and mercury thermometers and manometers (with some exceptions) are banned from sale.

The bill also contains limits on the sale of mercury-containing thermostats and cars containing mercury switches. It directs the State purchasing office to give preference to the purchase of non-mercury-containing products, when possible.

The bill was pried loose from its committee by Sen. Majority Leader Jim West, a Republican, who allowed Democrats to move the mercury bill out of the Senate in exchange for their support for the "voyeurism" bill, which makes it illegal to film up women's skirts. Both bills passed out of the Senate on April 17.

Digital fever thermometers were hot items in February exchange

LHWMP's Great Mercury Fever Thermometer Exchange gave away more than 20,600 digital thermometers during the month of February 2003. Residents received a free digital thermometer when they dropped off a mercury fever thermometer at 46 local pharmacies, including Briggs Pharmacy, Katterman's Sandpoint Pharmacy, Manhattan Drug, Pharmaca

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Local agencies join forces for Duwamish River

Businesses in the Duwamish River's drainage basin are the focus of outreach and assistance by staff from the Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County (LHWMP), King County's Industrial Waste Program and Seattle Public Utilities (SPU). The Duwamish River was recently listed as a designated Superfund Site by the US Environmental Protection Agency.

The local collaboration aims to educate businesses about pollution prevention in order to minimize and eliminate pollutants that contaminate sediments in the Duwamish. The project goal is to create a meaningful, measurable decline in pollutants that might otherwise re-contaminate the river after histori-

cal contamination is removed. The effort also provides an opportunity for local government agencies to share resources during a time of dwindling budgets and increasing demands for service.

Project participants have been educating each other on business practices and site elements that are the focus of their respective programs. They have crafted tools such as a joint field form that each agency can use during site visits.

Field staff from LHWMP are pairing up with field staff from King County Industrial Waste and SPU to conduct visits and share information. The joint visits help participants understand the different issues on the interior and exterior of businesses visited, knowl-

edge that will help improve site visits conducted by participants in the long term.

The initial round of visits is expected to last through October 2003. Businesses are provided with information to help them reduce potential impacts on water and sediment quality. Project team members are currently planning the next round of visits to ensure a cleaner Duwamish. Other possible results include a study of products that may contain phthalates and future collaboration with the City of Tacoma. Tacoma has faced a similar situation during the cleanup of Commencement Bay.

For more information, contact Josh Chaitin at 206-263-3076 or josh.chaitin@metrokc.gov. ★

—Josh Chaitin, Water and Land Resources

From the Program Administrator

Over the course of the next four to six weeks, the Management Coordination Committee (MCC) will come to agreement on a recommended 2004 Local Hazardous Waste Management Program budget. Not surprisingly, this will not be an easy or a fun task.

We, like virtually every public organization, are faced with budget realities that force us to make tough decisions about which services and activities to fund. Although we reduced our 2003 budget by 5 percent (from the level approved in 2002), our expenditures continue to exceed our revenues. In fact, if our 2003 projections are accurate, we will spend at least \$2 million more this year than we receive in total revenues. Although we will still have a positive fund balance, we will need to reduce Program spending again in 2004.

In order to facilitate the MCC's decision, senior staff from each of

the Program's partners will engage in a series of meetings to identify where spending can be reduced without significantly impacting the quality or overall level of service. We will in turn make a recommendation to the MCC that allows our Program to operate through the end of 2005 (at least) without raising our rates. This means reducing spending from 2003 levels by approximately 5 percent.

Will we need to reduce our spending further in 2005? At this point it is too early to say. In a few months, the MCC will receive information and a recommendation regarding whether or not we should seek an increase in the fees that support our Program. That decision and the Board of Health's rate action will determine the future funding level for our Program. ★

—Ken Armstrong, LHWMP Program Administrator

Lamp campaign earns Totem award

In March, LHWMP and its consultant PRR won a first place Totem Award from the Public Relations Society of America for its Fluorescent Lamp Media Campaign. The campaign was honored in the Society's "Public Interest Campaign" category.

In 2002, LHWMP staff developed a public-private partnership to promote fluorescent lamp recycling among businesses as part of its ongoing mercury reduction campaign. The "Light Brigade" worked with 24 QFC grocery stores in King County to recycle 50,000 mercury-containing fluorescent lamps. To spread the word to other businesses, staff worked with PRR to sponsor a media campaign, which included a kickoff event in the community and media coverage in the major newspapers and on local TV and radio stations. ★